A

SERMON

ON THE

DUTY OF MINISTERS TO OPPOSE THE EXTENSION

OF

AMERICAN SLAVERY,

PREACHED IN

MANCHESTER, N. H.,

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SERMON.

1 KINGS 18: 17, 18.

"AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN AHAB SAW ELIJAH, THAT AHAB SAID UNTO HIM, ART THOU HE THAT TROUBLETH ISRAEL? AND HE ANSWERED, I HAVE NOT TROUBLED ISRAEL; BUT THOU AND THY FATHER'S HOUSE, IN THAT YE HAVE FORSAKEN THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD, AND THOU HAST FOLLOWED BAALIM."

AT the time to which the text refers, there was great trouble in the kingdom of Israel. Under their wicked king, Ahab, the nation had fallen into idolatry, or large numbers of the people attempted to divide their worship between Baal and the God of Heaven. The king encouraged it. In consequence of this state of things, God, by the prophet Elijah, had brought upon the nation the calamity of a very sore drought. "It rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months." This alone would make great trouble in Israel. And as the drought was a judgement sent upon the land, in answer to the prayers of Elijah, it would be natural for those whose faith could not behold the hand of God in it, to blame the prophet as the cause of the calamity. The king did so.

Moreover, we must suppose that the prophet opposed the king in his attempt to introduce the worship of Baal among the people. A man like Elijah could not stand silently by and behold an idol usurp the place of the true God in the hearts of the people. As this was a favorite measure of Ahab, it brought the king and the prophet into direct contact. The preaching of the one was in direct opposition to the settled policy of the other. The nation was divided. Some, many even, thought with the king, that a little idolatry for those who chose it, might be very well. They

would not interfere with those who preferred the worship of God, but they wished that those who had a desire, might have the privilege of worshiping Baal. On the other hand, the followers of the prophet believed that there could be no fellowship between God and Baal, and therefore the idol must be driven from the land.

In this state of things, while the drought was parching the earth, and while the whole nation was in a high state of political agitation, and when the people were really in trouble, the king and the prophet met. At once the king said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" As much as to say—*You* are the man, who is the cause of all this difficulty—you have brought this drought on the land—you, by your opposition to the introduction of the religion of Baal, which I have recommended, have set the whole land from Dan to Beersheba in such a state of political commotion as threatens to dissolve the union of the tribes of Israel.

The prophet with calm dignity replied, "*I* have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." As much as if he had said, the man who leads a nation into sin, is the man who troubles that nation, rather than he who stands up to oppose the introduction of the iniquity, or who is the hand of God in bringing judgement upon the nation for *that* iniquity.

A similar state of things exists in our own land. Our nation is in trouble—in great trouble. This trouble has arisen out of the question of *slavery*, and the present phase of it, as well as the depth of its agitation, out of the question of the *extension* of slavery. Our Ahabs, or our men in authority, have shown a disposition to extend slavery, or at least to allow it to extend itself. The position is, remove all obstacles—let slavery and freedom have an open field, a fair play; under our constitution, one has the same rights as the other. To this new and strange sentiment

there has been great opposition. Our land from ocean to ocean has fairly rocked beneath the power of the angry discussion, and among the most earnest and decided of those who oppose the spread of slavery, are the representatives of the religion of Elijah—ministers of the gospel of Christ. And it has been said that they have done more than any other class of men of equal numbers to keep up this agitation. It has been affirmed by their opponents that State elections have been carried mainly by their influence. Of the truth of this assertion, I express no opinion. I admit however, that the land is greatly troubled, that this trouble has arisen from the discussion of the question of slavery, or opposition to its farther extension. I admit, also, that ministers have done very much to awaken, and keep alive this agitation, and they have done it by preaching against slavery extension in their pulpits on the Sabbath.

The question I propose to consider is this. Is it right for ministers of the gospel to preach against the extension of slavery? Ministers have done so, I have done so, we have been blamed for doing so. I propose to show why it is right, nay, why it is an imperative duty for ministers to do just what they have done in regard to this question. I believe it is the duty of ministers to preach against the extension of slavery.

First. Because it is a sin against God. The one grand idea of American slavery is that of property in man, it is the making of a man, a *chattel*, a *thing*, an article of merchandise to be held and used for the benefit of another. So the laws of the Slave States affirm. The statute of South Carolina declares, "Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reputed, and adjudged, in law to be *chattels personal* in the hands of their owners and possessors and their executors administrators and assigns, *to all intents constructions and purposes whatsoever.*"

This is common law and common sentiment in all the

slaveholding states, and a majority of the Judges of the Supreme Court in their recent Dred Scott decision, say, "Negroes of the African race were regarded by them as property and held, bought, and sold as such in every one of the thirteen colonies which united in the Declaration of Independence and afterward framed the Constitution." I do not think this opinion of the court correct, in regard to most of the Colonies at that time. But I do think it presents exactly the true Southern idea of slavery. Again, the judges say, "The Constitution recognizes the right of master and slave, and makes no difference between slaves and other property." Again, "The right of property in a slave is expressly conferred in the Constitution." Of the correctness of this opinion we have nothing now to say, only remark that this, at the present day, is the true idea of slavery.

Now we hesitate not to affirm, that this property claim of the slave-holder is at all times—under all circumstances, *sinful.* There may be a bondage not sinful. There may exist a legal relation of master and servant without sin, where it is sustained for benevolent purposes. But the idea of property in man—the claim to hold and use man as property, is *sin, sin* in itself. Just as looking upon a woman to lust after her is adultery in the heart, just as "whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer." So the man who claims property in his fellow man, sins in that claim. There is no such slavery in the Bible. The Hebrew servant was never regarded as property, nor bought, nor sold as such. Indeed the Hebrew master had no right to sell his servant at all. He could buy of those who chose to sell themselves—or of the heathen, but he could not sell, any more than Jacob could have sold his wife, whom he bought. Now, as it is the duty of ministers to preach against sin and oppose its extension, so they must preach against slavery and oppose *its* extension. Especially should

they do so, when those to whom they preach have a voice in the question of its extension.

Secondly. The last great command of Christ to his disciples was, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Ministers recognize the obligation of this commandment. The gospel in all its doctrines, and all its duties, in its life and power and spirit is to be preached everywhere. Now whatever tends to obstruct obedience to this command is to be opposed. Slavery does present such obstructions. The slave power raises its bloody arm and threatens to strike down the missionary of the cross who ventures to declare that God has made of one blood, all nations of men, and that each with open Bible has the right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience.

There is no such thing as true religious liberty in any slave State in this Union. Not only is the slave forbidden to learn to read the Bible, and those who teach him made subject to pains and penalties, but no man is allowed to read it to him, explain its meaning, and tell him the story of the cross of Christ, unless he does it so as to suit the demands of the slave power. God says to the preacher, "preach the preaching that I bid thee." But the slaveholder says, "preach as I bid thee," and he must be obeyed in all excepting a few localities, in the slave States, or the preacher must leave the ground.*

*In proof of the above position, I present the testimony of a Presbyterian Clergyman, a Virginian by birth, and who has spent forty years in that State. "I say from my own observation, that if a missionary is sent to the South, he cannot preach (for he dare not,) but a very few truths of the Bible. Can I prove it? Let us see. He can be sent probably to no congregation or people in the South, where the following sins will not be rife and rampant:

He will have in his congregation—

Men who hold their own *children* as slaves, and their own slaves as *wives*, although they may have at the same time, a *legal white* wife! Men who sell their own children! Men who cohabit with their own *daughters*, they being slaves! Men who *trade* in slaves, and buy infants from the breast, and give so much a pound for human flesh! (This last shocking item in the slave trade I know to have been practiced in Middle Virginia, where slavery exists in its mildest form.) Men who are guilty of great *injustice* and even cruelty to their slaves, as they do not requite them for their labor, by giving

It seems to me that this despotism which shuts out the light of heaven from millions of immortal minds, which forbids the gospel of the Son of God to be preached only as it may be done so as to give license to a system of wickedness which tramples under foot every commandment in the decalogue, and stamps even upon the gospel, the bloody features of its own image, has spread full far enough over our land.

Indeed, the minister who is true to his God and to the great commission, cannot by his complicity, allow it to spread farther. He must oppose it on the same principle that he would oppose Idolatry, Popery, Mahomedanism, or Atheism. He will, unless he is recreant to his Master and his duty.

Thirdly. Ministers should oppose slavery because it over-rides every institution of God's appointment which stands in its way. It either destroys them altogether, or so shapes and compresses them that they receive the stamp of its image, and are thus made subservient to its interests and control. Human government is one of these institutions. It is established, the Apostle declares, "For the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." The slave-power has not destroyed human government, but it has perverted its design—has made it the oppressor of the weak and the support of a system which defies God and brutifies man.

The church is an institution of God, and slavery has not destroyed *its* form, but it has compressed it, so as to leave

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them even a nominal equivalent for their services, nor sufficiently feed and clothe their slaves! Men, members of the church who do not care for the souls of their slaves, as though they were not rational and responsible beings! Men who make laws directly or indirectly to prevent the slave from being taught to read, and of course cut him off from having access to the Bible. Now a missionary at the South has such sinful practices all around him, and they are the *crying sins* of the land, and so far from being permitted to preach boldly against them, he is not even allowed to pass an oblique hint at such things."

its own deformed image stamped upon its otherwise fair brow. The teachings of the church in slaveholding states, are in accordance with the demands of the slave interest. Her doctors so interpret the scriptures as to make slavery a divine institution. Her ministers so preach, that the pulpit is made its bulwark.

Rev. Dr. Ross of Alabama in a review of the work of Rev. Mr. Barnes of Philadelphia, entitled "The Church and Slavery," says, "The relation of Master and slave is sanctioned by the Bible; that it is a relation belonging to the same category as those of husband and wife, parent and child, master and apprentice, master and hireling; that the relations of husband and wife, parent and child were ordained in Eden for man, as man, and modified after the fall; while the relation of slavery, as a system of labor, is only one form of the government ordained of God, over fallen and degraded man; that the evils in the system are the same evils of oppression, we see in the relation of husband and wife and all other forms of government."

He further adds, "The Southern slave-holder is now satisfied as never before, that the relation of master and slave is sanctioned by the Bible; and he feels as never before, the obligations of the word of God. He, no longer in his ignorance of the Scripture, and afraid of its teachings, will seek to defend his common sense opinions of slavery, by arguments drawn from "Types of mankind," and other infidel theories; but he will look, in the light of the Bible on all the good and evil in the system."

Again, he says, "I thank God, that the great deep of the American mind has been blown upon by the wind of abolitionism. I rejoice that the stagnant water of the American mind has been so greatly purified. I rejoice that the infidelity and the semi-infidelity so long latent, have been set free. I rejoice that the sober sense, North and South, so strangely asleep and silent, has risen up to hear

the word of God and to speak it to the land, I rejoice that all the South now know that God gives right to hold slaves, and with that right, obligations they must fulfill." This is the undisputed slave-holding interpretation of the word of God. Thus we say, slavery over-rides the church and makes it the minister of sin. Not the whole church. No, thank God, there is still an open Bible and a free pulpit. But that portion of the church found within the slave-holding states, is like the fawn within the folds of the Boa Constrictor, crushed—bleeding—dying.

Slavery, however, not only over-rides the church in its teachings, but also in its discipline. Slave-holding church members may perpetrate crimes against their slaves, and escape discipline, or even censure, which if committed in any free state in the Union would subject them to the highest penalty of the law. In confirmation of this statement, I present the following fact on the authority of Rev. Lyman Marshall of this city, who received it from the lips of the clergyman referred to, Rev. Dr. Lewers of New Jersey.—"Dr. Lewers was at one time pastor of a church in Williamsburg district, S. C. Dr. G., a physician and Presbyterian elder in the church referred to, had invited the Rev. gentleman to tea. It so happened that a female slave belonging to the Dr. and who had fled to a neighboring plantation a short time previous, was brought back to her master just before the arrival of the clergyman. She was immediately ordered off her horse by her master, but she replied that she was not able and wished to be helped off. The Dr. then applied the common slave whip, repeating his order, to dismount. She however, without attempting to obey, cried, "*Don't, don't, don't, I can't master.*" The master becoming more and more infuriated applied the lash with increased force, till she fell from her horse to the ground. He then commanded her to rise, she still replied, "*I can't I'am sick.*" The lash and the commands were repeated

until death relieved the sufferer. While at tea, the slave-holding elder remarked to his pastor, that rather an unpleasant circumstance had occurred on his plantation that day, a slave had died under the lash. The pastor on further inquiry learned the facts above stated. Suffice it to say, all the efforts of the pastor to secure the discipline of the elder were in vain. He was declared guilty of no offence, and worthy of no discipline."

Then it is well known that the slave-trader drives his traffic in human flesh without any regard to the claims of the church. A minister or deacon may sell on Monday the very person with whom they sat at the communion table on the Sabbath, and there is no power in the church to correct the wrong.

Marriage is a divine institution, and springing from this are the relations of husband and wife, parent and child. In these tender ties likewise, is found the most of earthly happiness. That blessed inheritance, which we call home, is set like a pearl in the frame work of these relations.—Slavery, however, knows nothing of all this. It drives its bloody ploughshare of ruin under the humble homes of millions of men, women and children in our land, while desolation follows in its train, and all the ties of nature and affection perish at its touch, "as flax is sundered at the touch of fire." Now if slavery usurps the place of justice, if it debauches the church and destroys the family wherever it goes, shall not ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ oppose its further extension?

We have however other institutions—our free common schools, the glory and the hope of our New England. The hope of every free-state and one of the chief bulwarks of our country, has no existence in the slave states, or at most but a very partial existence; excepting in large towns and more populous villages, the people are so scattered in these states, and partake so largely of the spirit of caste, a sys-

tem of schools cannot be maintained. As we believe our system of common schools is a great blessing, as we believe a government like ours cannot be maintained without it, as we believe the highest good of the people both for this world and the next demands it, we must oppose anything and everything which stands in its way.

We have have likewise benevolent institutions, which to some extent seem to have yielded to the demands of the slave power. The American Tract Society, is especially liable to this charge. Among all the books and tracts which this society has published, there is no one which fully and clearly condemns American Slavery, as a sin against God. It has published tracts against almost every other sin known in the land, except the sin of slavery. That, it has let alone. Why? we will not attempt to answer; far less, impugn the motive of the Publishing Committee of that valuable Society.* As Ministers of Christ, we protest against any increase or wider spread of that gigantic power which can thus control one of the great benevolent institutions of the age.

We talk much of our *free press*. It is our boast—our glory. But the press in our land is not altogether free.—In the slave states generally, it has no freedom at all. It may publish freely in defence of slavery, but with the exception of here and there a small locality, not a word can it say against it. In more than one instance, presses, which have ventured to exercise freedom in reproving the sin of slavery, have been destroyed.

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* We are happy however to notice the passage of some resolutions at the last annual meeting of this Society which indicate a change of policy in this subject. One of which contains the following dignified and christian sentiment.

"Those moral duties which grow out of the existence of slavery, as well as those moral evils and vices which it is known to promote, and which are condemned in Scripture, and so much deplored by evangelical christians undoubtedly do fall within the province of this society, and can and ought to be discussed in a fraternal and christian spirit."

Now if there were no other objections to the spread of slavery, than those just now named, the fact, that it overrides the church, the pulpit, the family, the government, the school, and the press, wherever it gains a foothold, is sufficient to make every minister who is true to his master oppose it.

Fourthly. Slavery perverts justice. Justice is a law of heaven, it will reign while heaven stands. But slavery, so far as it goes, perverts it, and crushes it under foot. It has recently been boldly declared by the highest tribunal of professed justice in our country, by a court whose ermine has hitherto been unstained, (or by a majority of its bench) that the "negro has no rights which white men are bound to respect," or they say that was the general opinion at the time of the Declaration of our Independence and the adoption of the Constitution, and hence that must be law now under the constitution. "The negro has no rights which white men are bound to respect." Is there any other interest or power in the land which could have extorted such an opinion from the lips of sane men? The late Dr. Harris of Dunbarton was a soldier in the war of the Revolution. A short time before his death, in a public address, he stated this fact. In one of the hard fought battles in which he participated, and at the moment when the columns on both sides were wavering, and victory seemed suspended in an even balance, a regiment of black men came to the rescue of the American army. "They fought like good fellows, and we were victorious." "Now" said he, "when the war is over and our Independence is established, will ye send these black men back into slavery? Oh what gross injustice!" And yet the late decision of the Supreme Court, has virtually done the very same thing. It has written on the banner under which those black men fought, and which they made victorious, "The negro has

no rights which the white man is bound to respect." O shame, where is thy blush? O justice, where hast thou fled?" We are told moreover that our Declaration of Independence does not mean what it says, and what for three fourths of a century it has been understood to teach. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights—that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

So declared our fathers. On the truth of these sentiments they appealed to the God of heaven.

But now after all these years have passed away—after our Declaration of Independence has been read by every civilized nation under heaven—and after every despotic throne in the old world has trembled in view of its noble and heaven born sentiments, we are calmly told that it is "too clear for dispute, that the enslaved African race were not included, for in that case, the distinguished men who framed the Declaration of Independence would be flagrantly against principles which they asserted."—

This interpretation of the Declaration of Independence is the Southern interpretation. Dr. Ross who has been previously quoted, declares in reference to it, "God gives no sanction to the affirmation that he has *created all men equal* —that this is self-evident—and that he has given them inalienable rights—that he has made government to derive its power solely from their consent—and that he has given them *the right to change that government in their mere pleasure.* All this—every word of it—every jot and tittle is the liberty and equality claimed by infidelity."

According to this new interpretation, this noble instrument, which we have repeated on every fourth of July, for four score years, should read "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men, except negroes, are created equal, but that they may be held as slaves—the property of white men.

Suppose our fathers had written out what slaveholders and Judge Taney now say is the meaning of the Declaration of Independence, and had appealed to the common sense of the world, and to the God of battles in defense of the same; where now had been our Freedom, our Constitution, our Union? Washington and Hancock had died traitors, and Bunker Hill monument would have remained in its native quarries.

The Judges declare furthermore that this doctrine which they now affirm to be the only correct interpretation of the Declaration of Independence, was the commonly recieved sentiment at that day. They say, speaking of the right to hold slaves, "In no nation was this opinion more fixed and generally acted upon, than in England, the subjects of which government, not only seized them on the coast of Africa, but took them as ordinary merchandise to where they could make a profit on them." Yet it is a well known historical fact, that three years before Jefferson wrote our Declaration of Independence the highest court of the king's bench, Lord Chief Justice Mansfield presiding, declared, that slavery was not a possible thing in England. Near the same time also, Cowper wrote,

> "Slaves cannot breath in England, if their lungs
> Receive our air, that moment they are free.
> They touch our country and their shackles fall!
> That is noble, and bespeaks a nation proud—
> And jealous of a blessing; spread it then,
> And let it circulate through every vein,
> Of all your empire—that where Britian's power
> Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too."

And while this state of feeling existed in England, there was in very many minds a similar state of feeling in our country. About 1770, six years before our Declaration of Independence, Dr. Hopkins of Newport, R. I., commenced a series of efforts in opposition to the slave trade and slavery. This work he continued for years. He preached

against the slave trade and slavery and though many of his own people were concerned in both, yet such was the state of the public mind, he was sustained.

Benjamin Franklin, while in London in 1773, wrote to an English friend, "that he is happy to learn that a disposition to abolish slavery prevails in North America, and that many of the Pennsylvanians have set their slaves at liberty. Also, that even the Virginia Assembly, have petitioned the King for permission to make a law, for preventing the importation of any more into the colony."

Benj. Franklin, shortly after this period, was President of an Abolition society. He published an address to the people of the Country, on the subject, and as President of the Society, signed a petition to Congress asking them to do all in their power to hasten the emancipation of the slave. In 1787, a friend of Franklin in England addressed him as the President of the Abolition Society, and announced that a similar society had just been organized in London. It was on this same year in which Franklin is addressed as the President of a society the purpose of which was to secure the Abolition of slavery, that he took his seat in the Convention which framed our Constitution.

Mr. Jefferson, likewise when a member of the colonial Legislature, (that is before the States became independent,) made an effort for the emancipation of slaves in Virginia.

The distinguished John Jay was known at the same time as a friend of the slave. He stood with Franklin, Jefferson, Hopkins and a host of others, as the living exponents of the Declaration of Independence, and the equal rights of men without regard to color. Yet in the face of these historical facts, we are calmly told by the highest tribunal in the land, that at that time—when Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and when Franklin held a seat in the Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States, that it is "*too clear for dispute, that the*

African race was not intended to be included in the one, and that under the other they are regarded only as the property of white men." Verily, nothing in our land, but the power of the slave-holding interest, could so cramp and bend the forms of justice. And as preachers of the Gospel which regards all men as equal before God, we must protest against its further increase.

I will notice but one point more on the power of slavery over the judiciary of our country. Chief Justice Taney, says:—" It is the opinion of this court that the Act of Congress, which prohibits citizens from holding property of this character, (that is property in slaves,) North of a certain line is not warranted by the Constitution, and is therefore void." Thus the Missouri Compromise, which had stood for a third of a century, like a great moral " break water" to roll back the dark tide of incoming despotism, (the darkest the sun ever looked upon,) from the fair fields of Kansas, nay from all our territories, is swept away by a single breath. Slavery is national, and as slavery and freedom cannot dwell together on the same soil, freedom is sectional. How are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath—publish it not in the streets of Askelon! Tell it not in Austria—publish it not in the states of the Pope, that our own free flag, that never faltered on any battle field, has been struck, and trailed in the dust, before the gathering minions of the slave power.

Of the correctness of the opinions of the court, I know nothing—I am neither lawyer nor judge. But on the supposition that it is correct, there are some things that are exceeding strange. The first is, if the Constitution recognizes the right of the master to the slave, and makes no distinction between slaves and other property, as Judge Taney says, then it is strange that the men who framed the Constitution should so studiously have avoided speaking of *slaves* as *property* in that instrument, but always calls

them *persons*. Then if the Constitution knows them only as property, why is that kind of property allowed a representation in congress, more than property in lands or stocks. Strange truly!

Again, it is strange that Benjamin Franklin who was at that time the President of an Abolition society and who for years had been laboring to promote the emancipation of the slaves in this country, should have helped frame a Constitution which should recognize property in man. Was the old philosopher deceived? He must have been, yet it is strange that he should have been. What did he mean, when as President of the Abolition society, he memorialized Congress on the subject of negro emancipation, if he was willing to make slave-holding a great National interest?—Strange!

Again, If Congress had no power to prohibit slavery in the Territories, it is strange that President Munroe, who signed the Compromise Bill, Henry Clay who advocated it, J. Q. Adams, J. C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and indeed all our prominent statesmen for thirty years should not have known it. It seems strange! We have been taught to regard those men as statesmen, deeply read in the science of our government. Daniel Webster, especially, has been called the great expounder of the Constitution, but it seems he lived and died in utter ignorance of its very first principles. He thought in the simplicity of his soul, that "the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union—establish justice—insure domestic tranquility—provide for the common defence—promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty, established the Constitution."

But it now appears that it was *no such thing*, it was not *liberty* but *slavery* they wished to establish, it was not union, justice, tranquility, the common defence, the general welfare which they meant to promote, but their *opposites*.—

And all this fine talk about freedom, justice, civil and religious liberty and our glorious Union, means nothing more nor less than the right to buy and sell negroes, holding them as property, any where, and every where, wherever our Stars and Stripes flutter in the breeze. Poor men, they lived in the dark ages of our country's history, and they died while its sun was below the horizon.

After this decision, which makes the negro, *property*, and nothing but property, under our Constitution, it seems to me that we need but one more decision from the same court, to fill the measure of our country's shame. And that is the decision that the Act of Congress which prohibits the importation of this kind of property, from the coast of Africa, and declares it *piracy*, should be pronounced *void*, unconstitutional. And why should it not be so? If slaves are property, if the Constitution knows them only as such, why should Congress declare it piracy to import that kind of property more than any other? Ah, if I do not greatly mistake the shadow of coming events, this decision is already a part of the programme. And if this first decision stands and is acquiesced in by the people, some judge, in defiance of truth, justice and history, will be found ere long to pronounce the second. But it will not stand, the shadow will not thus go backward on the dial of our national destiny. The rising spirit of freedom will yet sweep its bold hand across this nefarious record, and wipe out the bloody stain. When James the second packed the judicial bench, and raised a Jeffreys to its head, the measure of his iniquity was full, and English forbearance and patience ceased to be virtues. The popish king found that his claim to reign by divine right would no longer be sustained by an abused people, and he was compelled to flee the kingdom, to which he never returned, and his cruel judge went in one day from the high chancellorship, to the Tower, where he died in disgrace. The James' of the United States is

the despotic power of slavery, and *our Jeffreys' has* just pronounced his opinion. May they both take warning by the history of the past. Their claim of "Divine right" will not stand before the avenging bar of an outraged public opinion. A mightier than the Prince of Orange will ascend the throne.

One strange thing more is stated on substantial authority and that is, that in eleven of the original thirteen states, negroes were admitted to citizenship, and in nine of them to the rights of suffrage, at the time the constitution of the United States was adopted.

It is strange therefore, that they should be denied the right to become citizens of the United States. And that too when the Constitution declares expressly, "That citizens of each state shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several states." If the descendants of those who were brought from the coast of Africa were citizens of so many of the states, and the citizens of one could be citizens of all the states, it is strange that they could not become citizens of the *United States.*

But as I said, I can know nothing of the correctness of this judicial opinion of the Supreme Court. If the Constitution of the United States was to be interpreted by the same common sense rules which are applied to the interpretation of the word of God, or to any work on mental or moral science, we might venture to guess at its meaning. But slavery is a "*peculiar institution.*" The laws which support it—the moral reasoning which sustains it, are alike "*peculiar*," and the facts of history as they are warped and perverted to give it countenance, become no less "*peculiar.*" Hence none, but very "*peculiar*" minds, are supposed to understand the "*peculiar*" subject.

Fifthly. Another reason why ministers should preach against the extension of slavery is, it distorts and dishonors religion in the sight of men. This has indeed been referred

to, when we spoke of the power of slavery over the church, but we would now pass beyond the church, as an outward organized body, and observe how the faith of the church—or the faith of christians, their hope, and love, and rule of life, are necessarily distorted by the attempt to reconcile the gospel, its doctrines and life, with the institutions of slavery. It is affirmed in scripture, that "God hath made of one blood, all nations of men." "God is no respecter of persons," then, Christ has died for all, for the black man—for the slave, as much as for the white man and the *free*. Moreover, there is the golden rule, which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Now any attempt to make these facts and sentiments which enter into the very frame work of the gospel, to square with slavery, is to deform that gospel and make it a hissing and a scorn in the eyes of men. Can a man love his neighbor as himself, and yet drive him like an ox in the furrow? Can a man fully believe that Christ died for all, that his most precious blood cleanses alike the stains of sin from the soul of the master and the slave, and yet forbid that slave to learn to read the word of God which tells the story of the cross? Can the master sit at the table of our common Lord, and commemorate the dying love of Christ with his slave, and then sell that slave at auction?—separate the husband and wife,—the parent and the child? O yes, he possibly may. In the strange inconsistencies of human nature, it has been *done*, *again* and *again*. But it never was done, it never can be done without deforming the beautiful symmetry of the body of Christ, and defiling the heaven-born spirit which animates that body. Only think of a christian, buying, selling, holding, or driving men, women and children in the cruel chains of perpetual bondage, and all this in the name of Christ and for his glory. Henry Clay, at his room in Washington, a few days before his death, partook of the sacrament, in company with his minister and body

servant, and perhaps one or two other friends, and then died and left that faithful servant in bondage. How could he do it! His friends say that he was poor, and that that slave was then under mortgage, and could not be liberated. If so, it was an excuse. But in the eyes of the world, unacquainted with that fact, how such an act distorts the christian religion! There is no such thing as drawing the mantle, the pure and spotless mantle of the gospel, over the deformed and rotten carcass of slavery. As well might our first parents with their fig leaves, have hidden their sin and shame from the searching eye of God.

It is said, that the zealous Mussulman will say his prayers with increased fervency, when he is meditating murder. An American traveler remarked after a journey to the East, that when he noticed his Mohammedan attendants manifest any increased religious zeal, he expected that the cimeter was beings harpened for the neck of some unprotected Frank.

Rev. Mr. Seymore remarked, that while engaged as a missionary among the Ojibwa Indians, he had in his employ, an Irish Roman Catholic, whom he one day found on his knees, devoutly saying his prayers, while at the same moment, with one hand counting his beads, with the other he was conveying some valuable seed potatoes from a bag at his side to his pocket. We smile at such an incongruity, but when we come to look at the whole subject in the light of the gospel and apart from all the respectability and standing of the parties concerned, what greater absurdity is it for a man to say his prayers before robbery or theft, than it is for a man to sit down to the table of the holy communion with those who trust for salvation to the same Savior as himself, and then the next day or week, sell them at auction! Is not the sin as great to rob a man of his wife and children, as it is to rob him of his gold or his goods? Yet this is done repeatedly by the members of the church, in every slave state in the Union. It will be done wherever

slavery extends. A system which thus distorts religion, has spread full far enough.

Again, there is a manifest wrong about slavery. Those who are engaged in it, feel this wrong. The civilized world outside of slavery, points the finger of scorn at it. Now for a christian to attempt to defend such a system, is to make him the defender of other wrongs, and thus the moral sense is distorted—the conscience blunted and a manifest injury done to the character, piety and influence of the christian.

The human mind demands consistency, hence if one wrong is defended, the way is prepared for the defence of others. There is no moral reasoning which can make it right for slavery to go into Kansas, which will not defend polygamy in Utah. There may be found political reasons in favor of the one, which will not hold in regard to the other. But the moral law and the enlightened conscience must treat both alike. We have had enough of this warping of public conscience—enough of this debauching of the public sense. For all these reasons, we object to the farther spread of this gigantic wrong. And as ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we claim that we have the right to object; nay more—not only have we the right which we *may* exercise, but it is our bounden duty, from which we cannot escape.

We are aware however, that not a few in our country disagree with us on this important question of duty. We will notice some of these objections.

First. Slavery, and especially slavery extension has become a political question, and for that reason, if for no other, it should not be discussed in the pulpit. We reply, so any moral or religious question may become political. Temperance, Sabbath breaking, Bankrupt laws, Capital punishment, Popery, may each become political. Shall they all be discarded from the pulpit, as they assume that form? The worship of Baal was a political question in

the days of Elijah. But the old Hebrew seer declared what was God's truth in regard to it, notwithstanding. It would just suit the devil if he could have the whole political realm where he could reign supreme, unrebuked by the servants of the Most High.

Another objection is, the people are not agreed in regard to what is right and best in respect to the question of slavery. Are people all united on all other questions? And shall nothing be said on any great question until all are agreed? Had Elijah waited till the people of Israel were all agreed on the subject of Idolatry, he would never have withstood Ahab. Had Christ and his Apostle waited till the Jews were all of one heart and one mind, the Gospel would have remained a sealed treasure. The fact that we are not agreed, may be a reason why the ministers *should speak.*

While however it is admitted that men here in New England, are not all agreed in respect to many questions which grow out of the general subject of Slavery, is it true that there is a difference of opinion in regard to the question of slavery extension? Is any one in favor of extending slavery? No one so admits. Then why object to its being preached against. But says one "my party in politics stands in such a relation to this question that it is made to appear as though it might favor slavery extension, (though it does not,) hence all the discussion operates against the party." All we can say to such men and to such a party is: If you are actually opposed to the extension of slavery, *say so*, say it boldly, clearly, so that heaven and earth may hear, and then all trouble will cease. A man is known by his company.

Third. "But the discussion of the question of slavery agitates the community—it makes men angry. Better preach the Gospel and when the Gospel once exerts its benign influence over the hearts of men, then all sin will be repented of, and all troubles will cease." Why did

not Elijah content himself with preaching the Gospel, and let the subject of Baal worship alone? The old prophet must have seen how his preaching against Idolatry was agitating the kingdom,—how it disturbed the king and his court—and how Idolatry had become a political question, still he would preach against that *one sin* by name, and charge its guilt upon the government.

This was a common feature in the preaching of both prophets and apostles. Notice especially John the Baptist. Herod had great respect for him. He heard him gladly. Indeed the king listened so attentively to the "voice of one crying in the wilderness," that it seemed almost at one time as though he was about to embrace the religion of the coming Messiah. But alas! John like some at the present day, could not content himself with simply preaching the Gospel, and leave that to work out its peaceable fruits of righteousness upon the heart of Herod. He must pounce right upon that *one sin* which of all others would be most likely to disturb the heart of the proud Monarch. "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Rash man! Did he not know that if he could only get Herod to embrace the Gospel, all his sins would be forsaken! Why not then preach the Gospel, and let his sins, especially that *particular sin*, alone. Moreover, if he felt inclined to rebuke some sin, why not take some other. He might have gently spoken of Herod's intemperance, and perhaps he would have borne *that*, or he might have made some cautious allusion to the dancing of Salome, before a company of half drunken courtiers. This might not have been amiss. But that he should have come right out on that "delicate" subject, and drive the arrow home to the proud licentious king's heart, is strange.

It shows that John lived in a bye-gone age when men called things by the name which God gave them.

It shows also that John had never studied the science of

homiletics, in some of our modern schools, where the attempt is made to strip men of their sins, in such a gentle manner, that they are reformed before they are aware of it. Poor John, the Baptist. He lost his head by his rashness, and his fate is left on record as a warning to all, who, instead of preaching the Gospel, turn aside to rebuke the sins of great men. Then there were the immediate disciples of our Lord,—men who received the gospel from the lips of the Just One. They were often very unguarded in their expressions. They seemed to have no respect, "for principalities, or powers or spiritual wickedness in high places." Like a staunch mower, they swept the truth right and left, and all who stood in their way, felt the power of the keen edge of the sword of the spirit, which with giant arm they wielded. As a consequence they were called "the men who turned the world upside down." And when stripes and imprisonments failed to teach them, that commendable prudence, which ministers in our day are exhorted to practice, the sword—the cross—or the stoning cut short both the period of their lives and of their usefulness.

Fourth. Another objection to preaching against slavery extension is, "that slavery has now become a political question, and religion and politics should be kept separate." Yes, they should be kept separate, just as religion and business—religion and morals should be separate. But if the law of Christ is to regulate the rules of trade, and the rules of social intercourse, if whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God, why, when men come to discharge the highest duty of citizens, should they leave their religion behind? The infidel may say, religion and politics should be kept separate, but the christian surely will carry his religion with him to the polls and vote as he prays.

Fifth. Again it is said, "that ministers do not under-

stand the science of politics, they always make bad politicians, hence they had better let the whole subject alone." So far as I know, ministers of the gospel, never meddle with any political questions, except those which partake of a moral and religious character. They never have anything to say about currency—tariff—commerce, and internal improvements. These questions they very properly leave to others. But when moral and religious questions are drawn into the arena of political debate, they claim the right to speak. It is their duty to speak. The Bible is their field, and when political men come into it, ministers know no reason why they should not defend the truth. If men will keep their political questions out of the Bible, I will guarantee that ministers will forever let politics alone. But do not frame iniquity into a law, and make merchandise of human souls. Do not declare from the highest tribunal in the land, that between three and four millions of the inhabitants of this country, have in law, "no rights which white men are bound to respect." Do not take away the Bible from them, and rob them of all civil and religious liberty, trample under foot the marriage relation, and sell children like lambs in the market, and then ask ministers of the gospel of the Son of God, to be silent. As true as they partake of the spirit of the man of Calvary—as true as they are the successors of the Apostles—as true as the blood of the old reformers, the puritans—and the covenanters runs in their veins, they *will not* be silent.

Again it is said, "that the genius of our government requires that slavery and freedom should have equal play in our territories—that the Constitution protects one just as much as the other, and therefore ministers become at least constructive traitors, when they meddle with politics."

If this were so, if I could believe that our Constitution was framed, as much to protect slavery as freedom, then I

would say with its worst enemies, "It is a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell, and it ought to be destroyed." But I believe no such thing.

And as to the sophistry about giving slavery an open field and fair play, on equal ground with freedom, I need only say, It is just the plea of the pirate. He asks only to be permitted to pursue his bloody traffic, on an equal footing with the honest merchantman. The rumseller asks only for this. He does not wish that any branch of honest trade should be destroyed. He says to the flour, and cloth, and meat, and hard ware dealers, come and let us live together in love and peace. The thief—the robber—the counterfeiter only ask, like the slave-holder, for an open field and fair play. Satan, in Eden, desired no more.

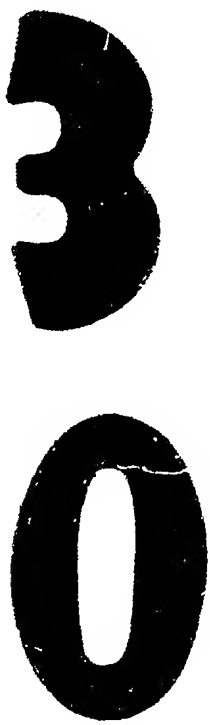
A more corrupt sentiment never found advocates in a christian land. It is atheistical, and diabolical. Then what sophistry—what a beautiful exhibition of the open field, and fair play doctrine, we have had in Kansas for the last two years. "There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart"—no honor—no principle and no patriotism when slavery is at stake.

But it is again said, "it will dissolve the Union if the teachers of religion and all who sympathise with them, take the position that slavery shall not be extended." Is, then, the union of these states cemented together by the blood of three millions of our fellow men? And can it be preserved only, on condition that we ourselves, likewise, become slaves? Give up our free pulpit, free speech, free press?

Finally. It is said, "if ministers do not maintain a respectful silence on this question of slavery, and especially slavery extension, they will not be supported and hence be compelled to retire to private life." This is a solid argument, and those who "have entered the priest's office for a piece of bread" may feel its weight. "Hunger will

eat through a stone wall." But after all, it is not half so bad to be driven from the ministry, as to be maintained in it, on condition of keeping silence on any sin, especially on any great national sin, which is eating at the vitals of the church and state, and is corrupting the very heart of the nation. Private life has but few terrors, compared with the frown of God—a guilty conscience—the pity of good men—and even the contempt of wicked men. If those who have so long and so kindly supported me in the ministry, choose to withdraw that support, because I preach against that iniquity, which is alike, our country's curse and shame, very well. That is a question of duty for them to determine. But in the name of all that is good, *do not* ask me to remain in the ministry on condition of silence on the question of American Slavery. I can come down from this pulpit, but while I stand in it, let me be free to speak as the Word of God, and the spirit of enlightened christianity demand.

And here allow me to devoutly thank my God, as well as this beloved people, that the terms of this most humiliating condition, have *never* yet been proposed to me. I have no fears that they ever will be, though I am confident that the agitation of the question of slavery has but just commenced in this country. All that we have seen is but as the ripple on the bosom of the summer lake, compared with the ocean, when the storm beats in its madest fury.

Two things will I ask at the hand of the Lord. One is, that this most earnest, determined agitation, on the question of slavery, may come while I live. I want to see it—I want to feel it—I want to have some humble part in it. The other is, that God may give the victory to the right, and all the world shall say "Halleluiah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." But will our glorious union withstand such commotions? It will if we are true to God and humanity. At any rate the eternal Throne will stand it, the

church of Christ will stand it, truth and justice will stand it. With these we are safe, "Though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."